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SUBJECT: SOMALIA - TFG PARLIAMENT MEETING IN MOGADISHU

¶1. (SBU) Summary: Transitional Parliament Speaker Aden Mohammed Nur "Madobe," who was en route from Mogadishu via Nairobi to Prague for the April 6 - 9 meeting of the ACP - EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, in an April 4 meeting described security in Mogadishu as steadily improving, although recent assassinations were cause for concern. Madobe calculated the number of MPs attending sessions in Mogadishu at 307, barely a quorum. The remaining 213 MPs were either traveling or still weighing the wisdom of moving to the Somali capital, he said. The Parliament had held two sessions to date: the first devoted to organizational matters; the second session to increasing the number of committees from fourteen to twenty-seven and amending rules of procedure to accommodate the recently-installed Alliance for the Re-liberation of Somalia (ARS) deputies. Madobe described al-Shabaab Spokesman Muktar Robow, a clan kinsman, as embroiled in a conflict with other members of the al-Shabaab leadership, but unlikely to bolt to a TFG government he "does not trust." Madobe confirmed that the TFG very shortly would present its conception of Sharia for Somalia to the Parliament. The TFG's framework would be considered by the Parliament's Justice and Religious Affairs Committee, he said. End summary.

Somalia to Feature at ACP-EU
Parliamentary Assembly

¶2. (SBU) On April 4, Transitional Federal Parliament Speaker Aden Mohammed Nur "Madobe," who was en route from Mogadishu to Prague for the April 6 - 9 annual meeting of the African, Caribbean, Pacific - European Union (ACP - EU) Joint Parliamentary Assembly met briefly in Nairobi to describe the work of the Parliament, conditions in Mogadishu, and the government's plans to implement Sharia. Madobe noted that Somalia would be discussed on the second day of the ACP - EU meeting.

Mogadishu Improves, but
Worrying Signs

¶3. (SBU) Madobe described a "noticeable" improvement in security in Mogadishu since the TFG's February arrival, but he cautioned that there were worrying recent developments. Among them were the recent assassinations or attempts on prominent Somali politicians, especially from the Parliament's point of view, the April 1 wounding of MP Amir Shaketi. The attacks were designed to intimidate the government, Madobe said, and if they continued, they might succeed.

¶4. (SBU) Al-Shabaab remained an enemy of the TFG, and there was "no hope" for reconciliation, as it was run by "foreigners." Madobe's clan cousin Muktar Robow (they are

both members of the Liban sub-clan) was embroiled in a conflict with other members of the al-Shabaab leadership, but it was unlikely, Madobe thought, that Robow would make overtures to the TFG, as he did not trust its leadership.

¶5. (SBU) Madobe disagreed with those who alleged that al-Shabaab's funding was drying up. There has been a recent influx of foreigners, he said, and the organization seemed as robust as ever. He implied that the World Food Program's humanitarian programs were benefiting al-Shabaab in areas it controlled, and urged that thought be given to channeling more aid to TFG-controlled areas.

Parliament in Session

¶6. (SBU) The improvement in security had allowed 307 MPs to relocate to Mogadishu. The remaining 213, Madobe said, were traveling, in training, or fearful of moving to the Somali capital. In its two plenary sessions to date, the Parliament had dispensed with all initial logistical problems, and agreed to increase the number of committees from fourteen to twenty-seven.

Sharia Discussion

¶7. (SBU) Madobe confirmed that the TFG was expected to present a framework for the discussion of the adoption of Sharia law very soon. (Prime Minister Sharmarke separately told Ambassador Yates that he would present the TFG's framework as early as April 4 or 5.) If the conception was

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acceptable to the Parliament, a committee to draft legislation on Sharia based the framework would be constituted. Like the Prime Minister and President Sharif, Madobe expected that the version of Sharia to be presented by the TFG would be "in harmony with Somali traditions," and would not cause concern among members of the international community.

Comment

¶8. (SBU) Comment: The initial decision to move the Parliament from Baidoa to Mogadishu met resistance from MPs --Madobe among them-- and clearly many parliamentarians have not agreed to attend plenaries in Somalia's sometimes violent capital. It is unlikely, however, that the percentage of MPs present in Baidoa at any time exceeded that currently present in Mogadishu. Madobe joined virtually all of Somalia Unit's contacts in believing that the decision to introduce Sharia was driven largely by the need to neutralize the TFG's opposition, which had tabled Sharia as a litmus test for the new government. More important to Madobe was the TFG's fragile hold on Mogadishu and the rising number of attacks targeted at prominent Somali personalities. End Comment.

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